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AUTHOR Lucas, Katharina Fachin
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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the experiences of 10 sixth-grade girls and 10 female undergraduate students, paired during the 1997-98 school year, as they took on the role of mentor or mentee in a planned mentoring relationship. A sociocultural analysis explored processes occurring on the personal, interpersonal, and community level that shaped their mentoring experiences. Organized by the university, the mentoring program paired a total of 52 female sixth graders from six middle schools with 52 female undergraduate students in their second year of college for a weekly after school mentoring program hosted by the middle schools. The undergraduates also enrolled in a 2-semester undergraduate seminar which included reflective writing, discussion, and readings about mentoring, tutoring, communication skills, and studies of adolescent girls. The experiences of the pairs were documented through observations, interviews, written reflection papers, and log sheets. Additionally, the developmental stage of each participant was assessed in both the fall and the spring using the Subject-Object interview. A sociocultural and developmental analysis of the experiences of being a mentor or mentee was constructed. The study concluded that the type of support each person in a mentoring program needed in order to feel successful taking on different roles and developing a relationship with an assigned partner varied according to her developmental stage (early or late adolescence). (Contains 19 references.) (Author/SM)

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Mentoring in Adolescence:

A Sociocultural and Developmental Study of Undergraduate Women and Sixth Grade Girls Paired in a Mentoring Program

Katharina Fachin Lucas

University of New Hampshire

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Abstract

The purpose of this ethnographic investigation was to study the experiences of ten sixth graders and ten undergraduates during the 1997-1998 school year as they took on the role of "mentor" or "mentee" in a planned mentoring relationship. A sociocultural analysis explored processes occurring on the personal, interpersonal, and community level that shaped the mentoring experiences of the participants.

The participants in this study included 10 sixth graders and 10 undergraduates who were paired in after-school mentoring program. Organized by a university, the mentoring program paired a total of 52 female sixth graders from 6 middle schools with 52 female undergraduates in their second year of college for a weekly, after school mentoring program hosted by the middle schools. The undergraduates also enrolled in three sections of a two semester undergraduate seminar which included reflective writing, discussion, and readings about mentoring, tutoring, communication skills, and studies of adolescent girls.

The experiences of 10 sixth grader-undergraduate pairs who met at 3 different schools were documented through interviews, observations, written reflection papers, and log sheets. Additionally, the developmental stage of each participant was assessed in both the fall and the spring using the Subject-Object interview (Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, & Felix, 1987). A sociocultural and developmental analysis of the experiences of being a "mentor" or a "mentee" in this program was constructed. Conclusions include developmental considerations concerning the formations of mentoring relationships between feamles in early and late adolescence.

Mentoring in Adolescence:

A Sociocultural and Developmental Study of Undergraduate Women and Sixth Grade Girls Paired in a Mentoring Program

During the 1997-1998 school year I had the privilege of helping coordinate an after school, university-based mentoring program for sixth grade girls called Project Mentor. Each girl met weekly at her school with a second year undergraduate from a local university. Together they tried to construct their own "mentoring" relationship in which the undergraduates would support and encourage the sixth graders' academic achievement in mathematics and science, self-esteem, and career aspirations. The context of this program provided a unique opportunity for me to study the process of how females at opposite ends of the same developmental stage, adolescence, develop supportive relationships with one another.

In the context of Project Mentor, the undergraduates were trying to take on the role of "mentor" in a new relationship with a sixth grader who was to be the "mentee." These unusual roles were attempted by girls and young women who, by nature of their age and our society, were also expected to take on the roles of an early adolescent and a late adolescent in the larger social context.

Adolescence, as a life phase, extends over almost a ten year period as people move from childhood to adulthood (Apter, 1990, p.18). For girls, early adolescence begins around the age of 11 or 12, when they are in sixth grade. Typically sixth grade is a time when children take on more responsibility at school and at home. Often they move to a middle school in which they must switch classrooms for different subjects which demands greater organizational skills, independence, and responsibility. Because the children have more teachers, they may have less

of a personal relationship with each teacher. The middle school environment as a whole is less nurturing than the elementary school environment. At home girls this age often take on additional responsibilities as well. Around sixth grade girls are usually considered responsible enough to babysit neighbors' children and younger siblings. Care-taking becomes a source of employment for girls and offers new opportunity for monetary discretion.

This time of greater independence and responsibility roughly coincides with girls' physical maturation. In sixth grade girls usually turn 12, the average age of menarche. Physical changes affect both how those around the girls perceive them and interact with them and how the girls perceive themselves. As their bodies begin to take on the shape of adult women, girls begin to be treated differently by both opposite sex peers and by adult men. They may experience a new kind of attention, sexual interest, or even sexual harassment. Their male counterparts may have different expectations of them as they look more womanly. At the same time, girls experience their own sexual desires and begin to have first "crushes." For the first time, they want to be desirable to the opposite sex. Now that their bodies are looking more like adult women, they compare their developing bodies to present cultural physical ideals in the form of extremely thin female models in magazines and advertisements. Girls begin see themselves in a new light.

The changes girls experience in social role at school, at home, and in their neighborhoods as more experienced people interact with them in new ways and expect new things of them can be emotionally challenging, mentally confusing, and exciting. Adjustment becomes a gradual, on-going process.

Over the passage of ten years, girls graduate from middle school, high school, and

possibly college. Each of these graduations is an additional transition towards greater independence and responsibility for self-definition. Like early adolescence, late adolescence holds unique challenges. The teenager leaves home, her parents, and high school friends, to enter a new community at college. With added freedom, new experiences, and distance from parental influence, young women begin to explore and make choices about their values, beliefs, and goals.

At college a young woman experiences greater autonomy and responsibility for daily decisions as well as exposure to diverse values and perspectives through course work and living arrangements. She experiences the opportunity and frightening responsibility of choosing a potential career path through selecting a major course of study. Away from home, she has the emotional distance to begin to reshape her relationship with her parents. At the same time, relationships with peers become completely under her own discretion. For many young women, college means creating, exploring, and ending intimate romantic partnerships.

Throughout the four years of college the young women know that they will be expected to take on the social role of adult by the time they graduate. Adjustment to present circumstances and experiences, resolving past histories, and concern about future goals and responsibilities provide for both great stress and exhilaration.

During any period of transition, a person is challenged to grow and hopefully is supported in her development by the people who interact with her. She comes to know people like herself, only more experienced, who have also struggled with understanding themselves and society. She confides in the people she trusts, seeks advice, observes role models, and listens to stories of other people's experiences and how they resolved them.

In Project Mentor, two people in transition, a girl entering adolescence and a young woman moving toward the end of adolescence, were paired to take on the roles of "mentor" and "mentee" in a new relationship. Mentoring in adolescence seems to hold great potential for challenging the girls and young women while also supporting their development.

Many articles and books have been written about how mentoring can positively affect the individuals involved in the relationship. Some describe the role of a mentor (Yamamoto, 1988; Gallimore, 1992; Hardcastle, 1988; Coles, 1993; Gehrke, 1988), possible stages of a mentoring relationship (Ferguson and Snipes, 1994), and the relationship between mentoring and success in adult life (Zuckerman, 1977; Williams & Kornblum, 1985; Werner & Smith, 1982; Levinson, 1978). Recently quantitative studies have investigated the effects of being in a mentoring program as a youth in terms of self-esteem, school attendance, antisocial activities, and academic achievement (Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 1995; Tierney & Branch, 1992). Additionally, studies based on interviews with participants have described factors like amount of time together, shared decision making, mentor expectations, and activities engaged in that seem to affect the success of mentoring relationships in planned mentoring programs for youth (Tierney & Branch, 1992; Morrow & Style, 1995; Hamilton & Hamilton, 1990).

Until now, studies of the process of forming mentoring relationships in planned mentoring programs have focused on satisfaction and factors contributing to satisfaction with the relationship. In contrast, this study investigated mentoring as an interpersonal, social role-taking process shaped by the developmentally-based perceptions of the participants. Based on observations, developmental assessments, and interviews, this study offers an in-depth look at how some girls in early adolescence and young women in late adolescence, as developmental

Selves with different ways of understanding themselves, others, and relationships, tried to build mentoring relationships with one another.

Purpose

This ethnographic study was conducted to study the experiences of ten sixth graders and ten undergraduates as they took on the role of "mentor" or "mentee" in a planned mentoring relationship. A sociocultural analysis explored processes occurring on the personal, interpersonal, and community level that shaped the mentoring experiences of the participants.

The ethnographic study was guided by several orienting questions, including:

1. On the community level, what was the environmental context of the program at three out of the six schools hosting Project Mentor? What was the physical environment like and what types of interactions did it promote? What role did the school liaison take on? What was the school culture in terms of curriculum and teacher-student relationships? How did the sixth graders and undergraduates interact as a whole group and as smaller sub-groups?
2. On the interpersonal level, what were the interactions of ten out of the 30 undergraduate-sixth grader pairs meeting at the three schools like when they met once a week after school? What types of roles did they take on and how did these change over time? What preceded either an expansion or contraction of roles? Were there any visible signs of affection or lack of affection?
3. On the personal level, what was the intrapsychological context of each relationship? What were the developmental stages of each of the ten undergraduates and ten sixth graders? How was each perceiving the relationship? What challenged or confused each person? What did each think she was learning from the experience? Did the person think of her partner outside of the mentoring program? What were the memorable moments for each person? How was the

developmental stage of the each member of the pair manifested in her perceptions of the relationship and interactions with her partner?

Methods

Participants

Of the six middle schools involved in the mentoring program, I chose to study pairs meeting at three of the schools that varied in size, curriculum, and affluence. From the 31 pairs meeting at the three schools, I selected ten pairs based on the criterion that both the undergraduate partner and the sixth grader's parents consented to involvement in the study. Four of the undergraduate-sixth grader pairs met at Stapleton Middle School, three pairs met at Chesterfield Middle School, and three pairs met at Bradbury Middle School. The sixth graders included girls in single-parent, melded families, and traditional families. The economic levels of these families ranged from working poor and receiving public assistance to upper middle class. All of the undergraduates were second year college students, except one student who was completing her final year of college. The undergraduates came from traditional families and families affected by divorce. The undergraduates' families were mostly either middle class or upper middle class.

Instrumentation

The developmental stages of each girl and undergraduate paired in the mentoring program constituted the intrapsychological context of that mentoring relationship. To assess the structural developmental stage of each of the 10 sixth graders and 10 undergraduates involved in the ethnographic study, Subject-Object interviews were conducted.

The Subject-Object interview is based on Robert Kegan's (1982, 1994) structural

developmental theory of the self. According to Kegan's theory, a person's Self can be conceptualized as a system that actively makes meaning, and through this process, becomes more complex over time. The cognitive and affective experiences of the person, the way s/he mentally and emotionally interacts with his/her life experiences, is shaped by the Self (Kegan, Noam & Rogers, 1982). The Self, as an underlying, meaning-making structure, is embedded in and non-critical of certain ways of making meaning, but can reflect on previous ways of making meaning.

Descriptions of these general underlying structures, called different stages of the Self, have been used to classify people into different five developmental stages using the Subject-Object interview (Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, & Felix, 1987). Three of the stages which are most relevant the participants in this study include: the Imperial Self, which may be seen in childhood and early adolescence, the Interpersonal Self in early, middle, and late adolescence, and the Institutional Self in late adolescence.

A person with an Imperial Self understands his/her own uniqueness and that other people have different points of view, but cannot think abstractly or consider two points of view simultaneously. People who are Imperial Selves "reason sequentially, that is, according to cause and effect" (Kegan, 1994, p.30). They are subject to and only know the world through their own wishes, needs and interests (Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, & Felix, 1987, p.14). At the Interpersonal Self stage, a person can internalize another person's point of view and reflect on two perspectives simultaneously, but cannot separate her/himself from her/his relationships (Kegan, 1994, p.31). Their own perspectives and emotions are deeply affected by what they perceive to be the perspectives and emotions of those around them. As an Institutional Self, the

person defines her/himself and makes decisions according to an integrated sense of his/her values and beliefs (Kegan, 1994, p.95). People with an Institutional Self can have close interpersonal relationships while maintaining a sense of themselves, their values, and their integrity separate from the relationship. They pride themselves on their independence. People with Institutional Selves see other people as organized self-systems as well. They reason abstractly, are able to relate multiple ideas to one another, and understand the concepts of multiple roles, ideology, context, and subjectivity.

During the Subject Object interview, the participant is given ten index cards with single words or phrases written on each one including, for example, angry, sad, success, and important to me (Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, & Felix, 1987). For the first fifteen minutes, the interviewer prompts the person to recall recent events when she experienced that emotion and write down on the card a couple words to remind herself of that memory. Then the person chooses a card and begins to talk about the event. The interviewer listens empathetically and asks probing questions to reveal the underlying subject-object material, in other words, what of her experiences the person is able to reflect on and what she is embedded in. Then the person talks about another card and the process continues for about an hour.

When scoring the Subject Object interview, the rater makes 21 distinctions between stages 1 and 5; there are 4 transitional steps between any two stages. Interrater reliability at complete agreement was 67% and 82% within 1/5 stage in Goodman's (1983) study. There is some evidence for test-retest reliability based on Lahey's 1986 study of 22 adults. She used the card "torn" to interview participants about "love" one week and no longer than two weeks later, used the same card to interview them about "work." Correlations between the two interview

scores were .82 (Spearman coefficient) and .834 (Pearson's r).

Inter-item consistency was established by a study of 72 Venezuelan adolescents between 12-17 years old (Villegas, 1988). Villegas interviewed each adolescent using the S-O interview on one occasion, but omitted the "strong stand" card. On another occasion, she used the "strong stand" card as a part of a different interview. The correlation between the scores from the "strong stand" card and the S-O interview was .96.

The S-O interview has been found to correlate moderately with Kohlberg's MJI, Loevinger's SCT, a measure of Piagetian stage, Selman's social-cognitive measure, and Gibbs' sociomoral measure (Lahey, et al, 1987, p.367). A longitudinal study of 35 persons reinterviewed annually is being conducted presently (ibid, p.368).

The results of the Subject-Object interviews provided the framework for a developmental analysis of the participants' perceptions of their experiences in the program and their interactions with their partners.

Data Collection and Sources

Because each of the three schools I selected had a different day of the week designated for the after school mentoring program, I was able to be present at every mentoring session in each of the three schools for both fall semester 1997 and spring semester 1998. I acted as a participant observer. In two of the schools I filled the role of school liaison, supervising the pairs and facilitating when necessary. In the third school I assisted the school liaison as needed.

Each week I would typically observe two pairs per hour mentoring session. I would always ask first and then sit near an undergraduate-sixth grader pair in order to observe and record their interactions in a notebook or on a laptop computer. From the observations I was

able to document how each person interacted both verbally and nonverbally with her partner on different weeks through the school year. The undergraduates also kept log sheets of what activities they engaged in with their partner and any concerns they had. These log sheets helped me explore changes in what activities they did together and how often they met. The field notes were used to interpret what roles each took on during the interactions I observed and how mutual affection was demonstrated or was not demonstrated over the course of two semesters.

In addition to the observations and log sheets, I interviewed each sixth grader and undergraduate twice each semester. I utilized the Subject-Object interview as a developmental assessment in both the fall and the spring to help me understand each person and the way she interpreted interpersonal experiences in general. Each interview lasted about a half hour for the sixth graders and one hour for the undergraduates as I tried to explore with the person how she felt about the experiences that came to mind and the source of those feelings.

I also asked each sixth grader and undergraduate both in December and again in April or May to reflect on herself and her experiences in the mentoring program in an interview. For example, I asked each person to describe her partner, the role she usually took on in the relationship and the role of the partner, and if she ever saw different sides to herself when she was with her partner. At the end of the program, I asked each sixth grader and undergraduate what the significant moments were in her relationship with her partner.

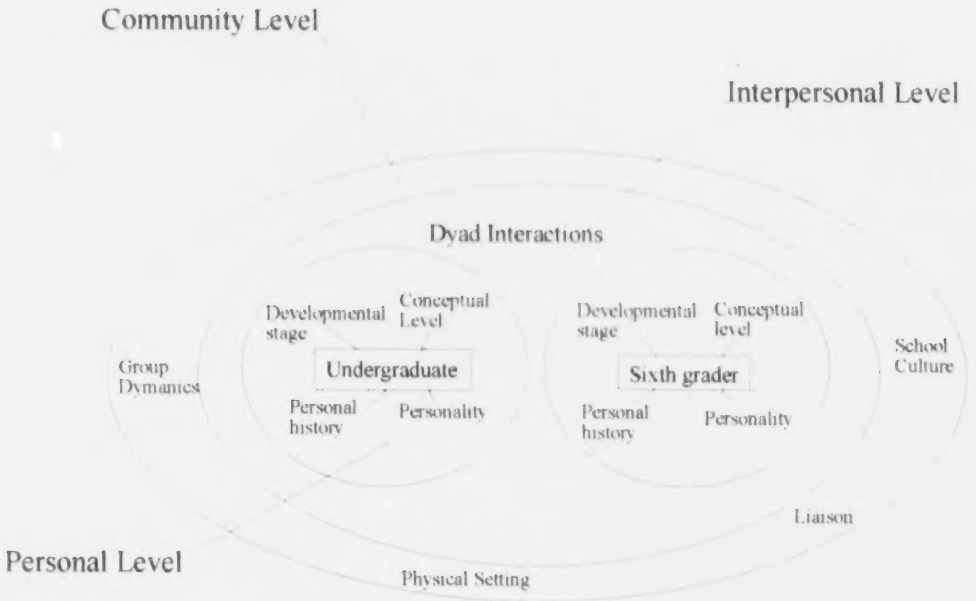
In addition to observations and interviews, the reflection papers that the undergraduates wrote for the mentoring seminars provided an additional source of data. The undergraduates had prepared for each seminar session by reading and responding to focus questions in the form of brief essays. The questions prompted the undergraduates to reflect on the readings, relate them

to their personal histories, compare them to their sixth grade partner, and discuss how they might apply to their mentoring relationships. The reflection papers give an indication of the undergraduates' perceptions of their sixth grade partners and of their mentoring relationships and how these perceptions changed over time.

Data Analysis

Because I came to this research project with the assumption that psychological development is a dynamic sociocultural process, I tried to learn about each person's experiences in the mentoring program by attending to processes occurring on three different, but interacting, levels: the community, the interpersonal, and the personal levels, (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. A Sociocultural Study of Mentoring Relationships using Three Levels of Analysis: The Community, Interpersonal and Personal Level



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To analyze processes occurring on the community level, I summarized my observations of the environmental context of each of the three schools, including the physical environment, the role of the liaison and myself, the school culture and curriculum, and the group dynamics apparent during the after school program. I consider the story of each pair's relationship to be embedded in these environmental contexts that supported and shaped, to some degree, the nature of the pair's experiences.

The second level of analysis focused on processes occurring on the interpersonal level. I analyzed the observations of the interactions of the sixth graders and undergraduates as they worked in pairs for the roles that each person was taking on during interactions with her partner. As I mapped the development of the relationship, I began to conceptualize the roles as socially constructed by the interactions of the partners.

Because I consider the three levels of community, interpersonal, and personal as conceptual tools, rather than separate and independent entities, I could not consider the interpersonal level of analysis without regard for the processes occurring on the personal level, the developmental stage, perceptions, and feelings of each person. Because of my methodology, I had interviews and observational data from various points in the school year. I was studying movement, a dynamic rather than a moment. Thus, I looked for changes in and persistence of perceptions and behaviors over time. Finally, I used developmental theory and the results of the Subject-Object Interviews and the PCM Test to interpret each person's understanding of her experiences with her partner.

Results

The Community Level: Three Schools Hosting a Mentoring Program

Three different after school environments constituted the community level context for this study. My observations of these environments focused on the physical setting, the liaison role, group dynamics, and the school culture. Among Stapleton, Chesterfield, and Bradbury Middle School there were many differences that affected the mentoring experiences of the participants (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Differences in the Environmental Contexts of Stapleton, Chesterfield, and Bradbury Middle School

	Stapleton	Chesterfield	Bradbury
Physical Setting	sixth grade classroom access to 6th gr. classrooms different groupings possible	library no access/distant from pairs in close proximity	home ec. classroom distant from pairs in close proximity
Liaison	present and active	not present	not present
School Culture	interdisciplinary units some experiential curriculum friendly and personal teacher-student relationships	textbooks + worksheets formal teacher-student relationships	traditional + progressive friendly teacher-student relationships
Group Dynamics	positive whole group, student-organized activities formed small groups worked in dyads	some hostility occasionally small groups formed worked in dyads	positive whole group of sixth graders interacted worked in dyads

At Stapleton, the pairs had great freedom of movement. The pairs utilized regularly about three different classrooms and the liaison's office. Some pairs chose to work at tables right beside other pairs, but if they wanted to be alone, any pair could go to another classroom, play outside, or just sit and talk outside. Resources like the library and the computer room were accessible and the staff was friendly to both the girls and the undergraduates. I never witnessed any negative repercussions from school staff for using all of the facilities of the school, nor any negative social repercussions for pairs doing different things in different parts of the building. The only room that was difficult to gain access to was the home economics classroom, and because special permission had to be gained through the liaison from the teacher, the group infrequently engaged in cooking activities.

The physical setting of Stapleton Middle School gave the pairs many options. For example, some of the pairs I studied at Stapleton spent most of their time doing academic activities. When they worked on academics, though, their interactions were pleasant and comfortable, perhaps because they could easily interact with things in the environment around them. I watched pairs go into one of several different classrooms when a problem was difficult and use the chalkboard. I observed a sixth grader walk up to a world map attached to the chalkboard in one classroom, pull it down, and "show off" how many countries she had memorized for a test. I witnessed every sixth grader point out any projects she had done when they were being displayed in the room. In the hallway teachers often posted photographs of the class doing projects and going on field trips and I would often see the girls pointing out themselves and their friends to their undergraduate partners.

Although the pairs had somewhat different interaction styles, all the pairs I observed at

Stapleton utilized several different locations throughout the school depending on what they were doing that week. They had choice and power in this environment. The school created a clearly academic setting, but the freedom offered, created a feeling both of individualism and nurturing.

Similarly, the liaison created an atmosphere of warmth. Actively involved in the program, she greeted all of the girls by name each week. She would announce opportunities for the pairs to become involved in activities outside of the after school program, which really encouraged additional interaction. Although most of the time the pairs did not engage in the exact event the liaison described, the pairs at this school did many more things outside of school than did the pairs at the other schools. (Certainly another important factor could also have been the close proximity of the school to the university.) The liaison was also always supportive and enthusiastic about anything a pair wanted to do and about every achievement of a sixth grader. For example, she would point out the school work of a sixth grader or mention something the sixth grader did to me or the undergraduate. This created a encouraging, positive atmosphere in which it was assumed that the kids were special, the undergraduates were special, and their mentoring relationships were of course going to be a wonderful experience.

The group dynamics at Stapleton were, on the whole, positive and encouraged fulfilling experiences for all of the four pairs I studied. Even periodically when a couple of the girls who had some social issues and who regularly went for counseling with the liaison became upset with one another, the liaison intervened and the situation resolved itself quickly. Although the pairs at Stapleton moved around the school to a great degree, the grouping was very flexible. When a sixth grader had an idea for a whole group activity, the undergraduate would encourage it, the liaison would praise it, and the whole group would inevitably vote to support it. Because of the

many options, the pairs had special memories as a whole group, as pairs who paired up at certain times, and many moments together one-on-one. All of the four pairs I studied at Stapleton were pleased with their mentoring relationships.

In contrast, Chesterfield was a much more constrictive environment. For example, the classrooms at Chesterfield were locked at the end of the school day. When I did see the girls interact with their teachers, none of their interactions involved pleasant casual conversation. The student-teacher relationships I observed were more formal. Perhaps this may be related fo why all the undergraduates I observed in the fall at Chesterfield seemed to have difficulty carrying on casual conversations with their sixth grade partners.

When the pairs met during the fall, they were relegated to the library and the resource room we used for snacks. In order to share their school work with their undergraduate partners, the sixth graders had to initiate going upstairs and take the risk that the teacher might not be there to let them in. On the whole, there was also far less student work displayed. Most of the time, the students completed worksheets and read out of textbooks. When in the library, two pairs may have worked at a round table together, but they did not interact much. The library had a more formal, serious feel to it than the resource room. The pairs would whisper when they talked. If a pair wanted to be alone, they had to move away from the tables and sit on the rug in a corner by the stacks. Typically, two of the pairs would sit on the rug when the undergraduate had planned an activity that did not involve homework or math problem-solving. The tables in the library seemed to be associated with school work.

I finally began to become concerned about how the environment was affecting the relationships one week when we couldn't use the library and we stayed in the resource room.

The pairs seemed more relaxed there and vocal with one another, so I decided to have them just sign out of the snack room and go anywhere they wanted. Even though it seemed like there were not many places to choose from, this small amount of freedom increased the diversity of locations that the pairs chose to use. This way, pairs that really wanted to be close together and to interact with one another could.

All three pairs I observed at Chesterfield had difficulty building a friendship type of relationship. It was not really until the spring semester that the pairs began to seem to have fun together and to get to know each other better. I observed one pair sit outside on the lawn in front of the public library and draw. Two pairs would sometimes do a craft together that one of the undergraduates had planned. In this case, the pairs would be talking and joking in a light-hearted way. Perhaps in the library it was hard for the sixth graders to come to know their undergraduate partners as anything but tutors, even though each undergraduate always tried to carry on a pleasant conversation there.

At Chesterfield, the liaison was less involved in the program and was associated with Title I tutoring and academic assistance by the sixth graders. She was not able to be present during the after school program, which I was not aware of until the first after school session. Although I was present each week and I did assume the role of facilitator, I did not know the school, the teachers, nor the sixth graders at the beginning of the year. These circumstances certainly contrast the experiences of the sixth graders at Stapleton who walked in on the first day of the after school program and were welcomed by the familiar face of the school counselor.

Additionally, the group dynamics at Stapleton were more adversarial. Throughout the fall there were two girls in the group, one who was in a pair included in the ethnographic study,

who had aggressive or erratic attention-getting behavior. It was apparent that the other girls were afraid of or embarrassed by these two. Because the sixth graders would arrive and would be teasing or being teased, fighting or being silent, when the undergraduates and I arrived, there was often a feeling of hostility, awkwardness, or withdrawal among the group. This could make for a difficult transition to pleasant pair interactions. In the spring, neither of these two more aggressive girls were present and I think it is not totally unrelated that the pairs I observed got to know each other better during the spring.

Bradbury Middle School offered a mixed setting of freedom and restriction. On the one hand, the group met in the home economics room, which created great opportunities for group experiences. Because the tables were pushed together in a rectangle in the middle of the room, all of the pairs, except for one pair, always interacted with one another. Whenever other pairs engaged in an activity, everyone else knew what they were doing and could copy it, comment on it, or share in it.

The home economics teacher showed the girls on the first day how to prepare popcorn and frozen juice, and from then on the girls enjoyed this responsibility and always took it on. In fact, two of the sixth graders I observed (and several others in the group) enjoyed food preparation so much that it was difficult for the undergraduates to try to engage them in a range of activities. In order to organize how many people were going to use the ovens each week, one sixth grader wrote up a sign up sheet in the spring for each pair to take a turn actually baking a desert and serving the whole group this snack. The sixth graders relished the baking.

On the negative side, the feeling of always being a part of a group made it difficult for some of the undergraduates I observed to interact with their partners on a more personal, and

one-on-one level. To be alone, someone would have to initiate going outside on the lawn or somewhere else. In fact, it was only one of the pairs I observed, who usually went off by themselves, who tended to have more personally revealing conversations. When the pairs did want to go somewhere else in the school, they were impeded. Several times a pair would want to use the computers in the library, but were refused access either because another after school program was using them or because the staff member did not trust the pair with Internet access. Additionally, the classroom used for the after school program was on the first floor near the school entrance. Like at Chesterfield, the pairs would have to walk to another wing of the building to access their own classrooms. This was not frequently done, which meant that the girls could only describe things they had done at school, but often could not show them. The activities often turned to baking and crafts which was the sixth graders' preference, and the sixth graders as a group would chat and jest with one another even if the pairs were doing different things.

Considering the development of the mentoring relationships of all ten pairs in their respective school contexts, it seems as though a warm liaison who is knowledgeable about the sixth graders as individuals, a physical environment that offers opportunity for different groupings, access to the students' own classrooms, and positive relationships among the sixth graders, may make it a little easier for sixth graders and undergraduates to build mentoring relationships with one another in an after school program.

The Interpersonal Level: Ten Undergraduate-Sixth Grader Pairs in a Mentoring Program

Over the course of observing and interviewing the ten pairs for eight months, I slowly began to see the roles of "mentor" and "mentee" as socially constructed by the individuals in the

pair, no matter the school context. Although the day-to-day dynamics of this co-construction varied across pairs, when I compared my observations of and interviews with all ten pairs, there seemed to be six interpersonal processes involved in the taking on of mentoring roles: 1). valuing each other's role; 2). taking on complementary roles; 3). identifying with one another; 4). sharing in a variety of activities; 5). experiencing turning points; 6). demonstrating affection for one another.

For all four pairs from Stapleton, the sixth graders really valued the roles that the undergraduates took on because the roles fulfilled certain needs they had. For one pair, the undergraduate's tutoring helped the sixth grader, who was very competitive, succeed in math and she was thrilled. Another sixth grader wanted to do well in school and also have a big sister to talk to about boys and have fun with. Her undergraduate partner invited her over to her dormitory several times, they often talked on the phone, and when they were in the after school program, they worked on homework.

In all of these cases, the partner took on a complementary role. For many pairs it took several months to learn how to take on complementary roles. For example, four of the undergraduates from different schools did not share as much about themselves spontaneously during the course of their conversations, which would incline the sixth graders likewise not share. Additionally, five sixth graders were very concrete and literal in their answers to undergraduates' questions, so the conversation did not flow smoothly. Sometimes what the undergraduate expected to do and what the sixth grader wanted to do were at odds. For example, if one person did not want to do academic activities, the other could not fulfill the role of tutor or academic enrichment person.

When the two people identify with one another, this seems to create a bond throughout the relationship. When short-comings become apparent or disappointments happen, they tend to be over-looked and tolerated. There were three pairs at Stapleton who felt very connected to one another. These were pairs that had common interests or saw themselves as similar in some ways. For example, one pair shared an interest in marine biology and were both quiet people. Another pair was made up of an outgoing, sometimes aggressive and hyper girl, and an undergraduate who also had the tendency towards hyperactivity and extreme "up" and "down" moods. After the first time the entire group at Stapleton met each other, the undergraduates could say who they would feel most and least comfortable working with. Although most of the undergraduates did not feel comfortable working with this sixth grader, this undergraduate was enthusiastic about working with her. She could empathize with her partner's behavior and even enjoyed it. From her own experiences of having friends disapprove of her hyper moods, the undergraduate especially wanted to make the sixth grader feel liked and accepted for who she was.

In contrast, three of the pairs at Bradbury sometimes felt like they could not identify with their partner. For one pair, the undergraduate would sometimes disapprove of the sixth grader's assertive behavior. It was only after she began to witness some visible affection from the sixth grader, that she began to feel more fulfilled by their relationship. Another pair was made up of an extremely shy undergraduate and a talkative sixth grader. The sixth grader would vocalize wanting to do a certain activity, and the undergraduate felt pushed into it. Over time the sixth grader wondered if the undergraduate really wanted to be there because she did not initiate much. As a different pair spent more time together, the undergraduate had trouble empathizing

with the sixth grader's feelings and sixth grader did not really want to be like the undergraduate either. These kinds of differences can cause roles to contract over time unless new ways of identifying with one another emerge.

Roles seem to be shaped and reshaped through shared activity. In order to be more things to the other person, to take on a more multi-faceted role, all of the pairs, no matter what the school, had to engage in various types of activities together. Perhaps because it involves seeing the person in a different context, meeting outside of the after school program seems to deepen the relationship. Roles stay constant, though, as long as a pair engaged in the same activity. Once the activities changed, the roles changed as well. Two of the pairs began with the undergraduate taking on multiple roles. The three pairs at Chesterfield and one at Bradbury gradually expanded their roles by engaging in different activities over time. The other pairs consistently did the same activities throughout the two semesters and their roles were generally constant.

Some relationships had definite turning points. For one pair from Chesterfield as well as one pair from Stapleton, and perhaps others that I did not witness, when one person wanted to reenact a parent-child event with her undergraduate or sixth grader mentoring partner, this was a significant turning point or indication of closeness. Presents given either by the undergraduate or by the sixth grader in three of the pairs also were demonstrations of a desire for or an assumption of friendship. For one pair, simply comfort with physical closeness was interpreted a sign of a deepening relationship.

Affection was an important aspect of the role-taking process across pairs. For two pairs, immediate and spontaneous affection between partners was apparent right from the start of the

relationship. Another pair simply liked each other and both really enjoyed spending time together. For four others, signs of affection were watched for and made the undergraduate feel confident in trying on a new role. Four undergraduates who had waited for their sixth grade partners to reveal that they liked them or liked being there and had worried about this, took the risk to demonstrate their affection first in the form of a present or in a conversation. These acts moved the relationships forward.

Although the roles in this after school program seemed to be defined by the titles of "mentor" and "mentee" and by the readings that the undergraduates read for the seminars, in actuality, roles expanded, contracted, and were maintained over the course of the eight months. One person could not unilaterally decide to take on a particular role because what she could continue to do was limited by how her partner reacted. Just as the school context constrained roles, the individuals themselves shaped their own roles and the roles of their partners.

The Personal Level: The Developmental Perspectives of Ten Undergraduates and Ten Sixth Graders

In order to analyze the stories of three pairs from a developmental perspective, first I had to construct the story of each pair's relationship, including each person's perception of her experiences with her partner, and consider the results of the Subject-Object Interviews. While summarizing the stories of seven pairs, I noticed how the developmental Selves of the participants were manifested in how they interacted with their partners, interpreted their partners' actions, and how they felt about their relationships. I began to listen to the voices of the developmental Selves as each person described herself and how she was experiencing this after school program. Across the pairs I saw patterns in what excited, disappointed, pleased, and

confused the sixth graders and the undergraduates as they reflected on their mentoring experiences. Imperial Selves, Interpersonal Selves, and Institutional Selves each experienced mentoring with their partners in subtly different ways. I think it is important for the facilitators of adolescent mentoring programs to understand the way their participants might be experiencing the program as they make choices about how to structure the program and as they try to support the participants in the roles of "mentor" and "mentee."

The Adolescent Imperial Self and Mentoring. Seven of the sixth graders I interviewed had either completely Imperial Selves or strongly dominant Imperial Selves. For many undergraduates this surprised them. In most of the reflection papers in which the undergraduates described themselves in sixth grade, they interpreted their experiences as if they had been Interpersonal Selves in sixth grade. They remembered their desire to wear the right clothes and hang out with the popular crowd as part of a need to be approved of and accepted. What they did not realize is that they were rewriting their memories of feelings from sixth grade through their present meaning-making. Interpersonal Selves begin to emerge for some girls during sixth grade, but for others, do not even appear yet. It is important for the undergraduates in programs like this to understand the perspective of their partners with an Imperial Selves in order to have realistic expectations for their partners' behaviors.

The Imperial Self sixth grader may seem a little immature to the undergraduate. She most likely will still enjoy playing more than deep conversations. All but three of the girls in this program clearly wanted to do activities more than anything else with their partners, although they also enjoyed sharing stories and joking. The seven girls with dominant Imperial Selves did not hold reflective conversations about themselves or the people around them, except in terms of

how others had treated them and how they felt about it. They could not have complex conversations about abstract ideas or internalized perspectives of others.

Presents were very important as demonstrations of caring and affection to the girls with Imperial Selves. These sixth graders' demonstrations of affection were concrete, in the form of home-made presents, hugs, or smiles. For example, one sixth grader at Stapleton gave her undergraduate partner a picture she drew for her the second time she saw her. Fundamentally, the Imperial Self sixth graders were motivated more by their own wishes and desires, and by the avoidance of discomfort, than by the internalized perspectives of others. During the Subject-Object interviews, they were subject to their wishes and desires but were not able to critically examine them yet. They were happy in relationships that fulfilled their wishes and desires, such as one that included fun activities that interested them and personal attention from an older person. Two sixth graders, for example, had particular goals that were important to them to achieve and that were met by the mentoring relationship. Therefore, that the undergraduate partners helped one sixth grader earn high grades, another finish her homework correctly, or four others complete crafts that required skills, made the relationships very fulfilling for the sixth graders with Imperial Selves.

An undergraduate who wishes to have a mentoring relationship with a sixth grader who is an Imperial Self needs to modify her expectations of the friendship aspect of the relationship. For five undergraduates this was a challenge. The girls with Imperial Selves understood friendship as a trading relationship. For example, friends take turns with one another, play fair, invite each other over for visits and parties, and exchange presents. The seven undergraduates who did these things with their partners also had sixth grade partners who perceived their

relationship as a friendship. If the sixth grader did not interact with her partner as if they were in a friendship and the undergraduate wanted a friendship, one way that six of the undergraduates expanded the sixth graders' notion of potential roles was to initiate a range of activities in various settings. Being concrete thinkers, these experiences opened the sixth graders' eyes to seeing the undergraduates as possible friends.

The Adolescent Interpersonal Self and Mentoring. Both the eight undergraduates and the three sixth graders who had dominant or emerging Interpersonal Selves had similar expectations of mentoring as a relationship involving a level of mutual understanding and trust. The undergraduates and sixth graders with even some of the meaning-making capacities of Interpersonal Selves, who were paired with one another, felt the need to identify with one another as they got to know each other. Having common interests, similar personalities and habits, and similar opinions will make them feel "connected" in the relationship. Conversely, differences were sources of disapproval and embarrassment for one sixth grader and one undergraduate.

A sense of connection was very important to these undergraduates' and sixth graders' satisfaction with the relationship. The undergraduates and sixth graders with Interpersonal Selves looked for signs that their partners "understood" them by seeing if the other person could "read" their feelings and intentions and react just as they would hope. They were both very sensitive to trust in the relationship and actively tried to build it by noticing the other person's feelings and moods. Similarly, they were vulnerable to disappointments as the partners' responses were continually interpreted to mean that she either wanted or did not want the relationship, liked or did not like her, understood or did not "really know" her. Two of the

partnerships between a younger person with an emerging Interpersonal Self and an undergraduate with a dominant or subordinate Interpersonal Self were very emotionally close relationship.

Having an Interpersonal Self had some implications for the type of role the undergraduate felt comfortable taking on in the relationship. Five of the undergraduates who had Interpersonal Selves looked for direction from their sixth graders because they needed their partners' approval. For example, two undergraduates were hesitant to plan activities because they feared that their partner might not like what they planned or believed that they didn't know their partners well enough to predict what they might enjoy. The response of the sixth grade partners deeply affected the undergraduates' feelings of success or failure in the mentoring role. Their confidence in attempting to expand their role in their sixth grade partners' lives depended on the positive responses they recognized in their partner. They benefited from a lot of encouragement from peers during seminar and from myself or the liaison if they were at Stapleton.

When undergraduates with full Interpersonal Selves were paired with Imperial Self sixth graders, particular issues arose with some of the pairs. Five undergraduates had some difficulty understanding why the Imperial Self younger person could not engage in the same type of close, personal relationship she had expected to have. A lack of what the undergraduate would recognize as confiding behavior on the part of the sixth grader made the undergraduate wonder if there was a lack of trust in the relationship. Some undergraduates also had difficulty believing that the younger person could feel totally happy and satisfied with a simpler relationship that did not include deep conversations about feelings. Sometimes at least in one pair, the undergraduate

interpreted the sixth grader's Imperial Self's concerns and behavior as selfish and self-centered. Becoming judgmental or disapproving seemed to hold the risk of limiting the potential of the relationship. On the other hand, when two Interpersonal Self undergraduates helped their Imperial Self girls achieve their goals while also having fun together, their relationships were very rewarding for both the sixth graders and the undergraduates. The concrete signs of affection from the Imperial Self sixth graders engendered great feelings of success in the undergraduates.

The Adolescent Institutional Self and Mentoring. Three undergraduates, one with an Institutional Self, another with a beginning to dominate Institutional Self, and a third with equally present Interpersonal and Institutional Selves, especially tried to understand how their sixth grade partners thought about ideas and experiences. Theoretically, those with Institutional Selves should be most able to understand developmental differences between themselves and younger partners in a mentoring relationship. On the other hand, as one particularly demonstrated, if they are in the process of controlling their Interpersonal Self or have moved completely beyond this way of thinking, they may have difficulty having patience for the concerns of a younger person with this perspective. One of the undergraduates with an Institutional Self expected her younger partner to have her own ideas and goals for the relationship. Another just expected her partner in general to have goals. The third modified her expectations of the relationship very early on as she got to know her partner. All three of these undergraduates especially wanted to encourage independent thinking in their partners. They realized, though, that they had to temper the way they challenged their partners and had to plan the kinds of supports that would be most meaningful to their partners who were at a different

developmental stage and conceptual level.

Limitations

As a qualitative study, this investigation into the mentoring experiences of participants in Project Mentor involved a small number of the total undergraduates and sixth graders involved in the program. In fact, there was no representation of pairs at three out of the total six schools. The findings of the ethnographic study are not intended to be generalizable. The descriptions of the contexts of three schools, the interactions of ten pairs, and how developmental stages manifested themselves in the mentoring relationships of ten sixth graders and ten undergraduates, give the reader an opportunity to come to know the experiences of some young women and girls in an after school, university-based mentoring program. Just as stories from more experienced people help us live through times of transition and challenge, these three stories can offer facilitators of mentoring programs a deeper understanding of the possible perspectives of their participants. Likewise, for participants of similar programs, the descriptions offer starting points for reflecting on their own experiences and hopefully gaining a deeper understanding of mentoring as a complex interpersonal and intrapsychological process.

Although the data used to construct the results section of this paper was carefully triangulated through observations, interviews, and written material, I analyzed that data using a sociocultural and structural developmental interpretive framework. The reader has to remember that, as the researcher, I assessed each participant's developmental stage and then inferred how the general perspective of that developmental stage was manifesting itself in the feelings and thoughts that person expressed about her experiences in the mentoring program. Likewise, I observed the partners, listened to how they described their interactions and their feelings about

their interactions, and then developed the idea that mentoring roles are socially constructed by the participants. Essentially, the results are interpretations of the data. If a different researcher with different epistemological assumptions took the same data, an entirely different analysis could certainly result.

Conclusion

The type of support each person in a mentoring program will need in order to feel successful taking on different roles and developing a relationship with an assigned partner will vary according to her developmental stage. With encouragement and information for the participants, I do think that most mentoring relationships in planned programs will be rewarding for all involved. It is important to remember for both the facilitators and the participants that one does not suddenly take on the role of "mentor" or "mentee." These roles have to be negotiated over time through the interactions of the partners. Any one person does not have total control over how the relationship will progress. Roles can expand or contract over time. People will also come into the program with their own histories and concerns that will in some way impact the nature of the relationship regardless of their developmental stage or the level of support given by facilitators of the program.

By looking at the environmental context, individual developmental stage, pairs' interactions, and individual reflections, I hoped to touch the many levels such an experiences takes in the lives of adolescents. Over the years the girls and young women I interviewed will write and rewrite in their own minds this first year of being in Project Mentor. What significance they will attribute to the experiences they had with their partners and if they will believe that it affected who they continue to become, will have to remain a curiosity for now.

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